

Regular Redevelopment Agency Meeting, February 12, 2002

Twin Pines Senior and Community Center, 1223 Ralston Avenue

**REGULAR MEETING – 7:30 P.M.**

**ROLL CALL**

Directors Present: Metropulos, Cook, Wright, Bauer, Warden,

Directors absent: None

Staff Present: Executive Director Kersnar, Agency Attorney Savaree, Agency Secretary Kern

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Pledge of Allegiance led by Agency Secretary Kern

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

**Mayor's Proclamation of Congratulations to Carlmont High School  
Millard Fillmore Trivia Hunt Champions**

Chair Warden read this Proclamation and presented it to teacher, Pat Braunstein. He congratulated Principal Jenoff, the students and the Mascot, Monty on winning first place in this contest.

Ms. Braunstein thanked the Directors for acknowledging Carlmont High School on winning this contest. She said it was a community effort, with everyone helping the students.

**State of the District Report by Sequoia High School District  
Superintendent Jo Anne Smith.**

Superintendent Smith reported that Carlmont High School had a collaborative relationship with the Belmont/Redwood Shores Elementary School District, and stated that the students came to the high school well prepared. She said she felt the private schools were now competing with the public schools for students, because of the well-prepared teachers throughout the District. She reported that in nine of the past 14 years, a teacher had been named "Teacher of the Year" from the District. Superintendent Smith reviewed the school construction that had been accomplished with the Bond Measure Funds, and reviewed the work to be

completed on the Carlmont campus. She indicated that some of the Bond funding had been set aside, and could be used in partnership with the City to fund Joint Projects, i.e., upgrade pool facility, upgrade theatre, or new track and field facilities. Superintendent Smith stated she was looking forward to talking further with the City Council about these ideas, and thanked them for allowing her to provide this update.

Adjournment at this time, being 7:50 P.M. this meeting was adjourned.

Meeting tape recorded and televised

Tape No. 515

Kathy Kern

Belmont City Clerk

### **PUBLIC/DIRECTORS COMMENTS**

Chair Warden invited comments on anything not on the Redevelopment Agency Agenda. There was no response.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

Chair Warden announced and explained the Consent Calendar and invited removal of any item not on the agenda for separate consideration. There was no response to this invitation. Moved by D.Wright, seconded by D Cook, and approved unanimously, by show of hand to adopt:

### **MINUTES APPROVED ON CONSENT CALENDAR**

Minutes approved were dated January 8, 2002

### **WARRANTS APPROVED ON CONSENT CALENDAR**

Warrants dated 1/17/02 in total amount of \$3,358.93 and dated 1/25/02 in total amount of \$2,960.00, and dated 2/1/02 in total amount of \$29.67.

### **End of Consent Calendar Items**

### **ADDITIONAL BUSINESS**

## **Discussion and direction regarding Redevelopment of the Emmett House.**

Executive Director Kersnar explained that this project was being brought forward now to determine the direction the Directors would like staff to take. He explained that there were competing Community Values regarding this project, which made it a difficult choice. Executive Director Kersnar stated that because a clear policy decision had never been documented for this project, this decision was ad hoc and circumstances are forcing a decision now. He said staff would like to begin making decisions based on policy, rather than project by project. He reviewed the elements of the Emmett House and described the various alterations that had taken place over time. He noted that it had been designated historic locally in 1992, and even though it was not accepted for the National Register, the location adds to its value. Executive Director Kersnar reported that \$700,000 had been spent on this project so far. He explained that alternatives that include sale of the property do not include estimates of the proceeds, which would reduce the amount invested by the Low and Moderate Income Fund (LMI) and Redevelopment Agency (RDA) funds. Executive Director Kersnar discussed the various alternatives for uses, and said that staff recommended that the house be moved to 1000 O'Neill, with construction of two LMI units for an additional cost of \$950,000. He noted that the land on Ralston could then be sold or leased. Executive Director Kersnar explained that the Redevelopment Agency was created to capture the property tax in a given project area to reinvest, in an attempt increase the property value. Tax money is restricted to this area, and in addition, 20% of this tax must be spent on Low and Moderate-Income housing.

In response to D. Bauer, Finance Director Fil reported that there was in excess of \$5 million in the LMI fund, with \$2.5 million available at this time. He stated that \$1 million in tax increment was received yearly.

**Mr. Lawhern**, 408 Hiller Street, stated that it was his recollection that the Redevelopment Agency had spend \$3.5 million to purchase the properties at the Village Center block, and sold the property to a developer for \$750,000. He said he thought it would go against the current General Plan to walk away from this project and sell as is, because the Plan required the City to work with public and private preservation. He said that at one time, a developer had approached the City with a proposal to preserve the building at its current location but nothing had ever come of this offer. He said he thought a Request for Proposals (RFP) should be developed and sent to developers to find if someone is interested in developing the site.

Mr. Lawhern stated that he would be in favor of moving the building if the other options were not viable. He said that 67% of the citizens stated in a survey that they were interested in historic preservation.

Mayor Warden clarified that he had attended the meeting with the developer that Mr. Lawhern had referenced, and it was his feelings that the proposal had been ad hoc, and the developer had never provided the City any further details after this preliminary discussion.

**Mr. McLaughlin**, 3313 Plateau, reviewed the various historic elements that had been destroyed over the last 50 years, and said the Emmett House was the only remnant of history left in the downtown. He requested that it be preserved, because it was unique and historic. Mr. McLaughlin said that if it could not be kept in its current location, he requested that it be moved and preserved.

**Ms. Peters**, 850 Laurel Avenue, said she was in favor of selling the Emmett House with conditions. She said she would like to see it left in the downtown area, and restored to bring back the time and history to the downtown area.

**Ms. Feierbach**, 3206 East Laurel Creek, reviewed the historic elements of the Emmett House after the second story was added. She clarified that the Village Center project was designed with the Emmett House included and was used as the cornerstone of the project. She explained that this was the reason the Directors purchased the Emmett House. She said she would like it moved and renovated with LMI units and a carriage house built for cars. She noted that the property it sits on currently could be turned into a plaza with a fountain. Ms. Feierbach said if it were moved the historical district would be enhanced, and would provide a buffer between the commercial and residential area. She suggested a task force be formed made up of commissioners and citizens to preserve the integrity of the historic home. (Picture on file in Clerk's office). She said she would not like to see the Emmett House torn down and reconstructed.

**Mr. Long**, 857 South Road, stated he was in favor of moving the Emmett House. He said his own home was built in 1906, and it gave him a sense of history in Belmont. He said that Twin Pines Park had been purchased for \$700,000, and 30% of the residents had been opposed to this purchase. In hindsight, it had been a wise move. Mr. Long said that he could visualize a plaza and small fountain on the property, which would become a natural pedestrian walkway, if the Emmett House were moved to a new site. He said that with the upward spiral in real estate, owning this land that the House sits on was a great investment for the future.

**Ms. Oliver,** 147 Beveledere, Chair, San Carlos Branch of American Association of University Women, said that she was concerned about moving the Emmett House because it would lose its visibility in the community. She reviewed the history of the historic elements that had been removed from the downtown area and explained that this house had been planned into the Village Center project and she wondered why the plan was being changed. Ms. Oliver said she thought the National Register would accept the Emmett House, because the criteria was not only about architecture, but who lived in the house. Ms. Oliver urged that the house be moved for preservation and for everyone to enjoy.

**Ms. Callagy,** 504 Davey Glen, stated she would like the Emmett House left in its present location to be the focal point for the downtown. She said she would like to see this home be a stepping stone to history, because once it was destroyed, it could not be rebuilt.

**Ms. Laughead,** 2632 Sequoia Way, stated she was in favor of saving the Emmett House. She said that it was listed in the Local Resource Inventory as a landmark resource because of its architecture and history. She agreed that it might be eligible for the National Registry because of these historical elements.

**Mr. Seivert,** 2046 Mezes, quoted from a previous staff report that indicated that the " Emmett House was a key feature of the Village Center development. It was suppose to remain in its current use i.e.; retail, antique store with residential above, and funds were budgeted for the cosmetic upgrade of the exterior". He reviewed the costs involved in the project and stated he would like it sold with conditions. Mr. Seivert said he was worried about the fact that a policy had not been developed, if it was sold to a developer, to protect the house from demolition.

**Mr. Bomberger,** 2021 Arbor Avenue, stated that the issues regarding this decision were driven by the values on historic preservation. He said he was sure that if the Directors espoused this value, the staff would find an alternative that would fit the situation. Mr. Bomberger said he would like to walk in the downtown in ten years and see we were still connected to our past because the building was located in the downtown because that is where it belongs.

**Mr. Kranen,** 1902 Notre Dame Avenue, said he would like to see the building preserved, but felt it did not fit with the architecture of the surrounding buildings. He suggested demolishing the building, preserving the elements and building a replica at 1000 O'Neill. He thought this idea would be cheaper than moving it.

**Mrs. Irmer.** 2656 Bridgeway, Sausalito, representing Belmont Village Center, she said when they developed their project, they were promised that something would be done with the Emmett House. She said over the years it has deteriorated and has become a detriment to the corner. Mrs. Irmer said she would like to see it moved, and a park or plaza built on the land.

**Recess** at this time being 9:20 P.M.

**Reconvene** at this time being 9:30 P.M.

D.Bauer said he appreciated all the community input and was willing to hear all of the options before making a decision.

D.Wright suggested exploring the idea of finding a developer or public agency and giving them the house and land, and condition this with the proviso that the house would be restored to the criteria that would be set forth.

D.Cook said that the Village Center was designed around the Emmett House concept. She said she would like the building kept on Ralston Avenue and have a developer take the property and fix it. She said that if the building was moved, she thought there was a viable option for that site.

D.Metropulos said it appeared there was a consensus that the building should be preserved, but the challenge now was at what location. He said he would like the building restored to its former architecture, and the investment was well worth it for historic preservation.

D.Warden said he was in favor of keeping the building, but worried that it would not survive in its current location. He said this house was an asset and he did not want to sell it or give it away, because the land was very valuable and an investment for the future. He said he could visualize the restored home on the O'Neill site and possibly registered on the National Registry. D. Warden said this move would preserve this house, help establish a historic district and preserve the other houses in this area. He said he had heard consensus from everyone to move and restore, and he agreed with this option.

D.Cook said that if the decision was made to move the structure she would like to discuss options for the land it sits on now.

Executive Director Kersnar said that staff could look into the possibility of a developer taking on this project and moving the house. If the developer built below market units, the LMI fund could help subsidize the project.

D.Wright said it looked like there was consensus to move the building and he thought direction should be given to staff to explore specifics on how to move it.

D.Warden said he was concerned about preserving the asset on the corner of Ralston, then the O'Neill site.

D.Bauer noted that the whole house would have to be rehabilitated to be usable and wondered at what point it would lose its historic value.

Executive Director Kersnar said the historic value of a landmark depended on the criteria established by the various registers.

D. Bauer said it might be a better fiduciary judgement to construct a plaza on Ralston, and recreate this home at O'Neill.

**Action:** on motion by D. Wright, seconded by D. Cook, and approved unanimously, to move the Emmett House to 1000 O'Neill and direct staff to explore options to finance it, inclusive of a ownership or developer model. An amendment was added, moved and seconded to fully restore the building with the widow's walk, roof and porches.

D. Bauer asked if an option could be added to consider building a replica of the building.

D. Wright said that inherent in his motion was the step to determine if the building could be moved or not. He said he would like to wait until all the information was provided to the Directors before he would consider this option.

D. Bauer said he would like the Directors to consider building a replica if it was not feasible to move it.

Executive Director Kersnar stated that the staff would report back with the options available for this project.

**ADJOURNMENT** at this time, being 10:05 P.M. this meeting was adjourned to the Regular Council Meeting.

Kathy Kern  
Agency Secretary  
Meeting Tape Recorded and video taped  
Tape No. 514